

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Original): A method of creating curved sausage links, comprising,

extruding an elongated sausage strand having linear protein fibers therein out of an elongated hollow meat emulsion tube,
partially restricting the flow of meat emulsion over and past a restriction element in the tube wherein a first portion of meat emulsion including a plurality of linearly and longitudinally extending fibers will move longitudinally over the restriction element to create a first portion of meat emulsion that gradually transitions to a second portion of meat emulsion that engages and passes over the restriction element and including primarily non-linear fibers disposed in a random orientation, and wherein the first portion is more susceptible to lengthwise shrinkage in the presence of heat than the second portion,
separating the sausage strand upon exiting the tube into a plurality of separate sausage links,
applying heat to the sausage links wherein the links will assume a curved shape by virtue of the different orientation of fibers in the two portions.

Claim 2 (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein the heat applied is a bath of hot water.

Claim 3 (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein the heat applied is a steam cooker with saturated hot air.

Claim 4 (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein the heat applied is a hot air oven.

Claim 5 (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein the links are moved over a hot frying surface.

Claim 6 (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein the heat applied is by applying hot liquid smoke to the links.

Claim 7 (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein heat applied is a microwave oven.

Claim 8 (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein heat applied is hot frying oil.

Claim 9 (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein the applied heat has a temperature of greater than 65° C.

Claim 10-18 (Canceled)